



# Red Lake County Cooperative Weed Management Area

## Featured Project

A state grant provided start-up dollars for a cooperative effort to manage and control invasive and noxious plants in Red Lake County. The competitive grant was available through the Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) program, administered by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). This is the first venture of its kind in Red Lake County and is led by the Red Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Red Lake SWCD staff worked with representatives from local, state, and federal governments to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and an overall strategy and work plan. The MOU identifies the CWMA team, mutual goals, interests and benefits and the roles and responsibilities each team member.

The CWMA team has implemented the program by determining what weeds will be targeted, what non-state dollars and in-kind contributions of staff time and equipment will be used to match the grant funds, and how the money will be spent.

The primary focus is weed control on non-crop areas (either public or private) such as pasture, road ditches, and farmyards. Funding paid for a broad range of tools and techniques for preventing and controlling weeds, including mapping, early detection, chemical control, re-vegetation, monitoring, and public education.



**A patch of Canada Thistle (top) can rapidly spread over a large area, whereas an area that has been treated (below) allows a diverse mix of native species to become established.**



**Location:** Red Lake County

**Partners:** The MOU for the Red Lake CWMA has been signed by officials of the following agencies: Minnesota DNR, Minnesota Dept. of Transportation, Red Lake County Environmental Services, Red Lake County SWCD, Red Lake County Highway Dept., Pembina Trails RC&D, Red Lake Board of County Commissioners, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA Farm Service Agency, and Townships in Red Lake County.

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# BWSR Featured Project

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**Project Timeline:** The Red Lake County CWMA was established in the summer of 2008 and continues to meet and strategize its battle against the noxious weeds of Red Lake County through program refinements such as infestation mapping, treatment mapping and further program development. The BWSR grant to the Red Lake County SWCD for this program expired in 2009, but based on interest from CWMA team members and landowners this cooperative effort addressing the noxious weeds seems to be here to stay.

**Project Costs / Funding Sources:** An initial CWMA grant was received from BWSR in the amount of \$36,000. About \$6,000 of that amount has been used for program start-up and administration. About \$10,000 was used for public outreach, mapping and technical assistance. The remaining amount has been used to pay for noxious weed treatment. Cost-share assistance is available to the CWMA team members and to individual landowners for weed management at a rate of 75 percent of the cost of the treatment, not to exceed \$500. The grant required local matching dollars, and those have included cash and/or in-kind contributions of staff time from the CWMA partners. More than \$17,000 has been paid by land owners.

**Keys to Success:** This program has brought together local, state, and federal agencies, land owners, and private industry for the first time in Red Lake County to jointly plan a coordinated effort to control the noxious weeds threatening Red Lake County's economy. Through this cooperative effort, an integrated strategic approach to weed management has been developed, and keys to the success have included information sharing, targeting of treatment, and providing financial assistance for the costs of treatment. Public outreach and public participation also have been keys to the success of the CWMA. Strategies have included posting information on the County and SWCD websites, submitting informative articles to community newspapers, holding public meetings, developing educational materials that can be distributed to landowners, and publishing articles in partner agency newsletters.

**BWSR roles:** BWSR staff developed guidelines for this grant program, which was created in 2008, and provided guidance on innovative weed control methods and techniques for establishing native vegetation.

## *Noxious weeds of Red Lake County*



Spotted Knapweed



Canadian Thistle



Absinth Wormwood



Leafy Spurge

**Measurable Outcomes:** The program has resulted in 1,265 acres treated for some or all of the above noxious weeds, and cost-share grants for weed control have been provided to 24 landowners. An additional 18 landowners have signed up for FY 2010 seeking a total of \$8,300 for treatment on 1,089 acres.

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